



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
(202)289-6400

ASMFC Schedules American Lobster Stock Assessment Peer Review *Summary Document Available*

Washington, D.C. – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission will be conducting an external peer review of the latest American lobster stock assessment, as prepared by the Commission's American Lobster Stock Assessment Subcommittee. The Peer Review, which provides an independent review of the stock assessment report, has been scheduled for May 8 & 9, 2000 at the Radisson Airport Hotel, 2081 Post Road, Warwick, Rhode Island.

The purpose of the external peer review is to examine the quantity and quality of data used in the lobster assessment models, examine the appropriateness of the models chosen to assess the population (in this case Delury, length cohort analysis, and egg per recruit), and evaluate the status of the stock. The peer review will provide advice to lobster biologists on ways to improve the assessment of this species. Advice from the peer review will also be used by the Commission's American Lobster Management Board in developing management strategies for the full implementation of Amendment 3 to the American Lobster Fishery Management Plan. The peer review is not meant to evaluate or suggest management regulations. Management regulations are developed and implemented through the Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Program.

An impressive panel of lobster assessment biologists has been gathered to review the lobster assessment. They are: Dr. Gerald Ennis (DFO Canada), Dr. John Hoenig (Virginia Institute of Marine Science), Dr. Peter Lawton (DFO Canada), Dr. Robert Muller (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission), Dr. Saul Saila (retired, University of Rhode Island), and Dr. David Sampson (Oregon State University).

The meeting will consist of formal presentations of the American Lobster Stock Assessment Report, including minority opinions on Monday, May 8. A public comment period will be conducted from 2:30 - 5:30 PM on Monday, May 8 and will continue into the morning of Tuesday, May 9, if necessary. Public comments from all attendees are encouraged, however, due to time constraints we would like to discourage any other formal presentations (i.e. overheads or slides) of information other than those scheduled on the agenda. A facilitated discussion of the terms of reference for the peer review will be conducted on Tuesday, May 9. This session is reserved for questions from the panel directed to the presenters or the public in order to clarify issues concerning each of the terms of reference.

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The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.

1444 Eye Street, N.W. -- Sixth Floor -- Washington, D.C. 20005
(202)289-6400 (phone) (202)289-6051 (fax)
www.asmfc.org

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Following this meeting a Terms of Reference and Advisory Report will be drafted by the panel members. This report will reflect the consensus advice and recommendations of the panel members on each term of reference. The final report will be presented to the Commission during its Spring Meeting in June 2000. Final reports will be published following the Spring Meeting.

A summary document, which provides a brief overview of the assessment report and the specific details of the peer review meeting, is now available. Copies can be obtained through the Commission's webpage at www.asmfc.org under the Public Input page, or by contacting the Commission. Copies of the assessment report, which is approximately 600 pages in length, are also available by contacting Vanessa Jones, Administrative Assistant, at (202)289-6400 or vjones@asmfc.org.

For more information on the Commission's peer review process or on the upcoming peer review, please contact Dr. Lisa Kline, Director of Research & Statistics, or Geoff White, Fisheries Research Specialist, at (202) 289-6400 or via email at: lkline@asmfc.org or gwhite@asmfc.org.

NOTE TO PRESS: If you would like to receive the Commission's press releases via email, please contact Tina Berger, Public Affairs & Resource Specialist, at tberger@asmfc.org or fax to (202)289-6051.

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